

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7814

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 4105

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, BG

SUBJECT: FIRST MEETING WITH NEW PRESIDENT

SUMMARY. IN MY FIRST MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MUSHTAQUE AHMED TODAY, CALLED AT HIS REQUEST, HE EMPHASIZED HIS NEED OF OUR ASSISTANCE IN HELPING HIM RESTORE NORMALCY TO BANGLADESH. HE SPECIFICALLY URGED IMMEDIATE U.S. ANNOUNCEMENT OF RECOGNITION AS HELP IN GUARDING AGAINST INDIAN INTERVENTION. HE CONCLUDED BY ASKING THAT HIS BEST WISHES BE CONVEYED TO PRESIDENT FORD. END SUMMARY.

1. ON AN HOUR'S NOTICE I WAS SUMMONED AT 1500 TODAY TO PRESIDENT MUSHTAQUE'S OFFICE AT BANGABHABAN, THE PALACE USED EARLIER BY PRESIDENT MOHAMMADULLAH. ALTHOUGH I HAD TAKEN POLITICAL COUNSELOR WITH ME, PRESIDENT ASKED THAT WE MEET PRIVATELY. HE BEGAN BY INQUIRING WHEN I WAS LEAVING FOR WASHINGTON (I HAD TOLD HIM AT DINNER BEFORE THE COUP LAST WEEK THAT I WAS RETURNING AT THE END OF THIS MONTH FOR SELECTION BOARD DUTY). I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT THIS DUTY HAD BEEN CANCELLED AND THAT I SHOULD REMAIN IN DACCA. HE SAID HE WAS DELIGHTED AND THAT HE HAD EXPECTED IT.

2. HE THEN SPOKE WITH GREAT EARNESTNESS, REPEATEDLY CLASPING MY HAND, OF HIS NEED FOR US TO HELP HIM RESTORE NORMALCY IN THE COUNTRY. HE SAID HE HAD NOT YET DEVELOPED

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AN AGENDA OF HIS NEEDS BUT WE MUST NOT LOSE THE

OPPORTUNITY TODAY WHICH WE HAD LOST IN 1971, REFERRING ME TO OUR CONVERSATION LAST MAY IN WHICH HE HAD MENTIONED UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED WITH U.S. OFFICIALS IN CALCUTTA TO REACH A COMPROMISE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST PAKISTAN. HE SAID WE WOULD UNDERSTAND HIS GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION AND MENTIONED UNFRIENDLY REFERENCES TO HIM THAT HAD ALREADY APPEARED IN THE INDIAN PRESS. HE SAID THAT, AS I HAD SEEN, HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO COPE WITH THE SITUATION INTERNALLY IN BANGLADESH WHERE CALM HAD BEEN  
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RESTORED WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF ANY BLOOD BUT HE WAS FRANK TO SAY THAT HE WOULD BE DEFENSELESS IF INDIA WERE TO MOVE BY LAND OR AIR, ESPECIALLY BY AIR. HE HAD RECEIVED A REPORT, HE SAID, THAT DISAFFECTED BANGALEES WERE BEING GATHERED IN REFUGEE RECEPTION CENTERS AND HE FEARED THE USE OF A TECHNIQUE AGAINST BANGLADESH NOW WHICH THE BANGALEES AND THE INDIANS HAD USED SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST PAKISTAN IN 1971. HE SAID THAT "YOUR PEOPLE, OF COURSE, KNOW EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON", I SAID I HAD NOTED THE INDIAN STATEMENT THAT THE EPENTS HERE WERE THE INTERNAL AFFAIR OF BANGLADESH AND HAD NO REASON TO BELIEVE THEY WOULD ACT OTHERWISE. HE SAID HE HOPED SO.

3. HE THEN ASKED ME ABOUT OUR POSITION ON RECOGNITION. I EXPLAINED OUR POLICY, EMPHASIZING THAT WE WERE MAINTAINING NORMAL CONTACT WITH HIS GOVERNMENT BUT THAT WE HAD DEEMPHASIZED THE QUESTION OF "RECOGNITION." HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW BUT RECOGNITION ALSO HAD IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS. WE WOULD HAVE TO JUDGE THE NECESSITY, HE SAID, BUT HE FELT IT WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO HIS EFFORT TO ASSURE NORMALCY AND TO GUARD AGAINST INDIAN ACTION THAT WE GRANT RECOGNITION AT ONCE -- "TODAY\*" HE ADDED FOR EMPHASIS. I SAID I WOULD REPORT HIS VIEW TO WASHINGTON. HE SAID HE HOPED I WOULD LET HIM KNOW IMMEDIATELY IF I GOT A REPLY ON THIS POINT.

4. WHEN I ASKED IF HE WERE ABLE TO SAY ANYTHING YET ABOUT THE NEW DIRECTIONS HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE, HE SAID THAT THE REDISTRICTING INTO 61 DISTRICTS WAS "ALL  
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OVER." HE SAID THAT THIS PROGRAM HAD BEEN LINKED TO THE BAKSAL ONE-PARTY SYSTEM AND THAT BY KILLING THE MOTHER, HE WOULD KILL THE BABY TOO. I ASKED IF THIS MEANT HE WERE DROPPING BAKSAL AND GOING BACK TO A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM AND HE SAID IT DID. HE SAID THE DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN LAST NIGHT AND WOULD BE CARRIED OUT WHEN NORMALCY HAD BEEN RESTORED IN THE COUNTRY, WHICH WE MUST HELP HIM ACHIEVE.

5. I TOLD HIM AT THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION THAT I WISHED HIM WELL IN HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. I SAID THAT, AS HE WOULD KNOW FROM HIS AMBASSADONEJS CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON, WE INTENDED TO CONTINUE OUR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND HOPED THIS WOULD BE HELPFUL. HE CONCLUDED BY ASKING ME TO FEEL FREE TO CALL UPON HIM AT ANY TIME AND BY ASKING THAT I CONVEY HIS BEST WISHES TO PRESIDENT FORD. HE ADDED THAT HE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER THIS WAS DIPLOMATICALLY APPROPRIATE AT THIS POINT BUT HE HOPED IT WAS. I SAID I WOULD BE GLAD TO CONVEY HIS GOOD WISHES.

6. COMMENT: TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH APPROACH TO ME YESTERDAY BY AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SIDDIQI (DACCA 4054), IT IS CLEAR THAT THE QUESTION OF OUR "RECOGNITION" HAS TAKEN ON EXAGGERATED PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCETNCTH NEW GOVERNMENT AND PRESIDENT PERSONALLY WHO EVIDENTLY BELIEVES IT WOULD HAVE MAJOR DETERRENT EFFECT ON ANY DISPOSITION BY INDIA TO INTERVENE. AS I UNDERSTAND OUR POLICY, ZBE ARE PREPARED AT SOME POINT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT RECOGNITION HAS BEEN GRANTED BUT NORMALLY WOULD WISH TO WAIT A FURTHER PERIOD OF TIME. NEVERTHELESS, I BELIEVE THIS WILL BE ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND EASIEST WAYS AT OUR DISPOSAL TO SHOW SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TO THIS NEW GOVERNMENT WHOSE PRESIDENT APPEARS INTENT ON POLICY CHANGES WHICH WE WOULD WISH TO SEE. I THEREFORE URGENTLY RECOMMEND THAT WE DO NOW WHAT WE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE PREPARED TO DO IN A FEW DAYS AND INFORM THE PRESS THAT WE HAVE RECOGNIZED THE NEW GOVERNMENT. WITH THE U.K., JAPAN, BURMA AND OTHERS ALREADY HAVING TAKEN THIS STEP, I CERTAINLY SEE LITTLE DRAWBACK.

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## Message Attributes

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